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## • Life in LAMORINDA •

### Stimulus Green Money Available: Lamorinda Gets Organized

By Sophie Braccini



Contra Costa communities met in Orinda to share best practices

Photo Sophie Braccini

At a September 24th meeting organized by the non-profit Contra Costa County Climate Leaders, local jurisdictions met to share best practices to take advantage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act; specifically, the stimulus money that is made available to promote energy efficiency.

Danville, Antioch and El Cerrito had large scale projects to discuss, citywide energy retrofits that are likely to have an impact on their bottom lines. These jurisdictions are large enough to get a direct award with a defined amount of money. Smaller communities, such as those in Lamorinda, need to "opt-in" and enter a competitive grant process with defined projects. Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda are working on identifying

plans that would qualify.

"The town has indicated that it intends to submit an application for the competitive awards," said Moraga's staff engineer John Sherbert. "The CEC (California Energy Commission) has published 'target' levels of funds available for the town; the target is approximately \$93,000 based on the population." According to Sherbert, the CEC is expected to release the formal program solicitation by mid-October.

Monica Pacheco, assistant to the Orinda City Manager, indicated that even if the city intended to compete, no specific project had been chosen.

Lafayette Planning Department intern Sarah Allen confirmed that, "Lafayette will be applying for the Energy Efficiency and

Conservation Block Grant funding available through the California Energy Commission."

"We anticipate the funding to be used for modifications to the former Lafayette Library," added Allen, "we hope to retrofit the building to make it energy efficient and eventually house the City Offices there."

Moraga has ambitions for its library as well. "We have a full wish list," said Sherbert, "at the library we would like to increase the insulation of the attic and upgrade the heating system." The town's list is quite long, including attic, duct insulation, upgrading of the heating and air conditioning system at the Hacienda, and upgrading lighting at parks and parking lots.

Sherbert confesses that the application process is quite complex and that he's been on the hook. "We will have until late November to submit a package, and the money should reach us the first part of next year," he said.

This money allocation is not the only one that communities can apply for. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is working to assemble a coalition of County-level representatives to develop a competitive proposal for funding from the State Energy Program for a regional building retrofit program. The available pool of funds is approximately \$95M, and ABAG believes their efforts could secure approximately \$10M of the total.

This money would be used for residential energy efficiency programs. "I participated in a 'webinar' on September 29th hosted by ABAG where they described the proposed steps and timelines for the regional project," said Sherbert, "the next scheduled meeting is October 9 where the steering committee will be formed."

Lafayette has an interest in the ABAG program, but City Manager Steve Falk notes its limitations. "Let's manage our expectations," he said, "ABAG represents 11 counties, and so if they receive the \$10M grant, that will be about \$900,000 per County. Divide by the 19 Contra Costa cities, and that would suggest that there will be about \$47,000 per city - which might be enough to retrofit one, two, or at best a few houses."

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### City of Orinda Keeps Community Fund Afloat by Hosting Youth Triathlon Fundraiser

By Lucy Amaral



Northern California Kids Triathlon logo

Budget cuts may be brutal these days, but the City of Orinda is finding clever and creative ways to keep treasured community events from going on the chopping block.

On Saturday, November 14, the City of Orinda will host the first Northern California Kids Triathlon, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Miramonte High School. Proceeds from this event will go to Orinda's Community Fund, youth programs and to honor the memory of Joe Loudon. Orinda's Community Fund helps support local events and activities such as Orinda's Fourth of July Parade, public art displays, youth programs and concerts in the park.

According to Sue Severson, Mayor of Orinda, the genesis of this event is twofold. "The last couple of years the City of Orinda has been trying to partner with schools to offer more opportunities for youth to do healthy activities," she said. "As well, as is true with most agencies, we had to do major cuts to our budget and an unfortunate cut was community funding for programs and events. As Mayor, I was asked to help brainstorm on how to raise private dollars for community events and one we chose was a kids' triathlon. With this event, our youth would benefit as well as the city."

The NorCal Kids Triathlon, as it has become known, is the only youth-specific triathlon in the area and will be open to children and teens ranging from kindergarten to high school. Competition will be divided by grade level K-2; 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. The participation fee is \$40 per person, and \$35 for additional children in the same family. The Relay Team fee is \$100. The race itself will be composed of the traditional triathlon events: swimming, running and biking, with the start and finish at Miramonte High School and course distances adjusted for age appropriateness. Because this is the first triathlon the city has offered, Severson said that the event will be limited to 300 participants.

Severson noted that USA Productions, a special event company, has been retained to produce the race, but emphasized that it is truly an Orinda event. "Miramonte High School leadership students, for example, helped design the logo and Facebook link. Booths will be set up for use by local non-profits and the Mira-

monite Boosters will be hosting a snack shack on site," she said. "We want this to be a high quality event; one that everyone will enjoy participating in."

Severson also said that event volunteers are still needed and information about the event with registration links can be found at [www.norcalkidstri.org](http://www.norcalkidstri.org).

"This triathlon is a fun, healthy activity for our youth and our community," said Severson. "It gives our kids a chance to do something in our area that they can't do anywhere else, and, (at the same time) will help raise some money for our Community Fund."

### Where the Real Work is Done

... continued from page 3  
 The document allows for three-story buildings with a maximum height of 45 feet.

A few elements are still contentious. For example, the Bruzzone family believes, based on figures from recent upscale developments, that a number of .7 parking spaces per unit are sufficient, while Salamack believes that one parking space per

unit would fit Moraga better. Another discussion involved green building requirements. The approval process includes an obligation for the developer to provide "a description of sustainable practices to be used in the development of the project, including how the development will comply with the Town's

green building requirements." Loewke said, "If the green building requirements are not an ordinance, they should not be imposed on us."

According to Planning Director Lori Salamack, only polishing remains to be done and the Specific Plan could be approved by the Council before the end of the year.

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